

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 03652 200232Z

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SUBJ: CONSPIRACY TRIAL ENDS

REF: DACCA 3620 AND PREVIOUS

1. THE SPECIAL MARTIAL LAW TRIBUNAL ON JULY 17 CONVICTED 17 JSD LEADERS AND WORKERS AND ACQUITTED 16 OTHERS ON CHARGES OF CONSPIRING TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT BY FORCE AND TO SUBVERT THE ARMED FORCES. LT. COL. (RET.) ABU TAHER WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH, AND MAJOR (RET.) M.A. JALIL, PRESIDENT OF JSD, AND TAHER'S BROTHER, ABU YUSUF KHAN, WERE SENTENCED TO TRANSPORTATION FOR LIFE. JAIL TERMS WERE GIVEN TO 14 PERSONS, INCLUDING JSD LEADERS A.S.M. ABDUR RAB AND SERAJUL ALAM KHAN AND EX-ARMY MAJOR ZIAUDDIN. ACCORDING TO THE LOCAL WIRE SERVICE ACCOUNT OF THE JUDGEMENT, "PRINCIPAL AIM OF THE CONSPIRATORS WAS TO ELIMINATE AND DESTROY" THE REGULAR ARMED FORCES AND REPLACE THEM WITH THE "SO-CALLED GANOBHINI OF THE JSD AND KADER SIDDIQUI."

2. ACCORDING TO A JULY 18 BSS ACCOUNT (WHICH WE PRESUME WAS APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT), SOME LEADERS OF THE

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PAGE 02 DACCA 03652 200232Z

JATIYO SAMAJTANTRIK DAL (JSD) AND OTHERS "HAD CONSPIRED

TO WAGE WAR AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH, TO OVERTHROW IT THROUGH VIOLENT MEANS AND TO UNDO COMPLETELY THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION OF 7TH NOVEMBER 1975, A REVOLUTION OF THE PEOPLE AND OF THE ARMED FORCES OF BANGLADESH." TO THIS END, LT. COL. TAHER AND OTHERS ARE ALLEGED TO HAVE "SEDUCED OR TRIED TO SEDUCE" MEMBERS OF THE DEFENCE FORCES IN ORDER SUBVERT AND DESTROY THE REGULAR FORCES AND REPLACE THEM WITH THE GANOBAHINI (I.E. THE PEOPLE'S ARMY) "OF THE JSD AND KADER SIDDIQUI WHO WERE UNDER THE BECK AND CALL" OF TAHER. JSD WAS ACCUSED TO CONDUCTING POLITICAL STUDY CLASSES AND OF DISTRIBUTING "PREJUDICIAL" PUBLICATIONS AND FUNDS TO THE DEFENSE FORCES. THE NEWS ACCOUNTS SAY THAT THE ARMED CADRE OF THE JSD ARE INVOLVED IN POLITICAL KILLINGS OF INNOCENT PEOPLE AND ALSO KNOW THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE SO-CALLED KADER BAHINI. THE ARTICLE STATES THAT THE EFFORTS OF THE GANOBAHINI LEADERS TO TAKE CREDIT FOR THE "GLORIOUS REVOLUTION" OF NOVEMBER 7 WAS THWARTED BY THE PATRIOTIC TROOPS, AND THEREFORE THE JSD TURNED ON THE REVOLUTION AND "URGED THE TROOPS TO TAKE UP ARMS IN ALL THE CANTONMENTS OF BANGLADESH."

3. LINKING THE JSD WITH PRO-MUJIB ELEMENTS AND WITH INDIA, THE ARTICLE SAYS THAT AFTER AUGUST 15 COUP SOME "SELF SEEKING AN UNPATRIOTIC" BANGLADESHIS FLED TO "A NEIGHBORING COUNTRY WHOSE REACTIONS WERE MANIFESTLY INIMICAL TO US." IT FURTHER SAYS THAT ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE JSD VISITED INDIA SEVERAL TIMES SINCE AUGUST 15 AND THAT "KADER SIDDIQUI'S GANABAHINI IS PLAYING THE ROLE OF AN ARCHE ENEMY" AND CAUSING UNTOLD MISERIES TO THE PEOPLE ON THE BORDER. ANOTHER PART OF THE PLOT WAS SAID TO BE THE OPERATIONS OF MAJOR ZIAUDDIN AHMAND WHO, WITH HIS BAND OF DACOITS, HIJACKED LAUNCHES AND LOOTED POLICE STATIONS IN THE SUNDERBANS. ZIAUDDIN, WHO DESERTED THE ARMY IN NOVEMBER AND WAS CAPTURED SOME MONTHS LATER, WAS GIVEN THE FOURTH STIFFEST SENTENCE: 12 YEARS RIGOROUS IMPRISONMENT AND A FINE OF TAKA 20,000.

4. SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS RI AND A FINE OF TAKA 10,000 WERE A.S.M. ABDUR RAB, GENERAL-SECRETARY, OF THE JSD-AFFILIATED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 DACCA 03652 200232Z

PEASANT LEAGUE; AND PROF. ANWAR HOSSAIN, LECTURER IN BIO-CHEMISTRY AT DACCA UNIVERSITY. SERAJUL ALAM KHAN, THE FOUNDER AND IDEOLOGUE OF THE JSD, AND TWO CORPORALS WERE GIVEN SEVEN YEARS RI AND A FINE OF TAKA 10,000. (THE BSS ACCOUNT NOT INDICATE THAT KHAN WAS SENTENCED IN ABSENTIA BUT HE IS COMMONLY BELIEVED TO STILL BE AT LARGE AND PROBABLY OUT OF THE COUNTRY.) TWO CIVILIANS, INCLUDING ONE WOMAN, AND

THREE NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS WERE SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS RI AND TWO OTHER NCO'S TO ONE YEAR.

5. AMONG THE 16 PERSONS ACQUITTED WERE DR. AKLAQUR RAHMAN, A DACCA UNIVERSITY ECONOMIST; MAHBUBUR RAHMAN MANNA, GENERAL-SECRETARY OF JSD'S STUDENT LEAGUE; AND MD. SHAHJAHAN, PRESIDENT OF THE LABOR WIND OF JSD. WE THINK THAT ONE OF THE ACQUITTED, WARASAT HOSSAIN BELAL, IS ANOTHER BROTHER OF COL. TAHER, WHO HAS ALREADY BEEN SENTENCED ON AN ILLEGAL ARMS CHARGE IN CONNECTION WITH THE NOVEMBER ATTACK ON INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER. OF THESE SIXTEEN, WIGHT ARE NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS.

6. THE BSS ACCOUNT LISTS 18 BARRISTERS AND ADVOCATES WHO SERVED AS DEFENSE LAWYERS. THE OVERALL DEFENSE WAS REPORTEDLY DIRECTED BY ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN, SENIOR BANGLADESHI POLITICIAN AND FORMER CHIEF MINISTER, AND ZULMAT ALI.

7. COMMENT. AS ANTICIPATED, THE GOVERNMENT IN THE CONSPIRACY TRIAL ATTEMPTED TO LINK THE JSD WITH PRO-MUJIB FORCES AND BY STRONG IMPLICATION WITH THE INDIANS. THE SENTENCES OVER-ALL WERE SOMEWHAT MORE LENIENT THAN SOME OBSERVERS HAD EXPECTED. TODAY'S PRESS, JULY 19, ANNOUNCED THAT PRESIDENT SAYEM HAD CONFIRMED TAHER'S DEATH SENTENCE BUT DID NOT INDICATE WHETHER OR NOT THE EXECUTION HAD TAKEN PLACE.
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